

What is claimed is:

1           1.    A dental instrument comprising:

2           an actuating assembly; and

3           a grasping assembly, coupled to the actuating assembly,  
4           adapted to conform to the contour of a dental appliance;

5           wherein a member of the actuating assembly or the  
6           grasping assembly is adapted to facilitate distal, mesial, or  
7           both distal and mesial manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           2.    The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping  
2           assembly comprises a plurality of members, each having a  
3           grasping surface.

1           3.    The instrument of claim 2, wherein the members are  
2           angled to approximate the contour of the dental appliance.

1           4.    The instrument of claim 2, wherein the members are  
2           curved to approximate the contour of the dental appliance.

1           5.    The instrument of claim 4, wherein the members are  
2           curved concavely.

1           6.    The instrument of claim 4, wherein the members are  
2           curved convexly.

1           7.    The instrument of claim 2, wherein a first of the  
2   members comprises an apical seat near the top of its grasping  
3   surface.

1           8.    The instrument of claim 2, wherein one of the  
2   members comprises a traction feature disposed upon its  
3   grasping surface.

1           9.    The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping  
2   assembly is removably coupled to the actuating assembly.

1           10.   The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping  
2   assembly is permanently coupled to the actuating assembly.

1           11.   The instrument of claim 1, wherein the grasping  
2   assembly is formed as part of the actuating assembly.

1           12.   The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the  
2   actuating assembly is angled to facilitate exclusively distal  
3   manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           13.   The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the  
2   actuating assembly is curved to facilitate exclusively mesial  
3   manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           14.   The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the  
2   grasping assembly is angled to facilitate exclusively distal  
3   manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           15. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the  
2 grasping assembly is curved to facilitate exclusively distal  
3 manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           16. The instrument of claim 1, wherein the actuating  
2 assembly is a bifurcated actuating assembly.

1           17. The instrument of claim 1, further comprising a  
2 locking assembly disposed along the actuating assembly.

1           18. The instrument of claim 2, wherein a portion of the  
2 actuating assembly is formed to selectively facilitate mesial  
3 or distal manipulation of the dental appliance.

1           19. A dental instrument, adapted to facilitate distal,  
2 mesial, or both distal and mesial manipulation of a dental  
3 appliance, comprising:

4           a grasping assembly, having a grasping surface shaped to  
5 approximate contour of the dental appliance, and having an  
6 apical seating member disposed near the top of the grasping  
7 surface; and

8           an actuating assembly, operatively coupled to the  
9 grasping assembly.

1           20. A matrix band placement apparatus, adapted to  
2 facilitate distal, mesial, or both distal and mesial matrix  
3 band manipulation, comprising:

4           a first grasping member, having a first surface shaped to  
5       approximate curvature of a matrix band, having an apical  
6       seating member disposed along an upper edge of the first  
7       surface;

8           a second grasping member, having a first surface shaped  
9       to approximate curvature of a matrix band and shaped to  
10      cooperatively engage with the first surface of the first  
11      grasping member; and

12          a compound actuating assembly, operatively coupled to the  
13      first and second grasping members, adapted to cooperatively  
14      engage the first and second grasping members, having a locking  
15      assembly disposed and adapted to secure engagement of the  
16      first and second grasping members.